

## A Cut of the Cards

"Yeah, I understand what a virus is. What I don't get is how I got it."

"You know that little red "M" that comes up on the bottom of your screen, the one that means McAfee, as in McAfee anti-virus protection. The one that..."

"The one that's supposed to stop this crap from screwing up my computer so I don't have to be standing here having this conversation with you, that one?"

The kid grinned up at me with nicotine-yellowed teeth, twenty years old tops, fucking spider-web tattoo crawling up from beneath his buttoned white polo.

"Yes, that's the one," he replied smugly, pleased with my ignorance. "...The one which you failed to properly renew seven months ago."

"Christ," I muttered under my breath.

"All the anti-virus systems constantly update themselves for fresh threats. A year or two of the updates are included when you buy them, but then they shake you down for some more coin. ...You remember a little box coming up reminding you that you needed to..."

"Yeah," I cut in brusquely, shaking my head, recalling the annoying message coming up on my screen day after day, that and the endless stream of e-mails that would generate every other day in my box.

...you are not fully protected...you are not fully protected...

This pencil-neck clown was waiting for me to go on, to confess my stupidity in greater detail. He's lucky I didn't crack him right in the mouth.

"Can you fix it?"

"Already done."

"Seriously?" I replied, smiling despite myself as I glanced down at the tower I'd disconnected and hauled over here yesterday, crashed and frozen with half my account data not currently backed up.

"Got it cleaned it up real nice for you. All the files recovered, the McAfee updated and current."

"Thank you."

"No problemo," he answered, tapping over the keyboard in a blur.

"What was the virus?" I asked, fishing a tight roll of bills from my trouser pocket.

"Something new."

"And how'd I catch it?"

The kid eyed the cash with distaste and nodded across to the overweight blond at the reception desk.  
"You can settle up with her."

"Okay," I nodded absently, curious now as to what set my computer into its own Ice Age. "So can you put a finger on it or not. Was it an e-mail somebody sent me, or..."

"Abby pays up on poker night," he answered slyly, cocking an eyebrow as he met my gaze.

"Huh?"

"Hey, it's cool, man."

I leaned forward an inch or so, a palm flattened on his cluttered work station, my voice drawn down a couple octaves: "...What the fuck are you talking about?"

"The story," he whispered warily, pointing at the screen, shifting away as I came behind him to look at what he was talking about. I read down for a few lines—a damned stroke story.

"I didn't download that."

"Hey, we're..."

"Don't say we're discreet kid, fucking please. If I was down-loading jack-off stuff, I think I'd know it."

"Well somebody did," he shrugged, again his fingers fanning across the keys. "Who's Mar-solo101?"

I shook my head in disbelief, half-knowing, not dead-on-sure.

"Here's the...last Thursday, just after noon. ...Your system crashed out when?"

"...Thursday night."

"Res ipsa loquitur, man. The thing..."

"The thing speaks for itself, yeah, I know."

"You wanna find out who this Mar-solo101 is?"

"Yes, I think I do."

"They clear their history. It's a free account."

I read a few more lines of the story, pissed off with this whole deal, the inconvenience, the childishness of it all.

"Unclear it and print out a listing of all this crap they've been looking at, okay?"

"I'm really not supposed to..."

I peeled to the center of my roll and freed an extra crisp c-note, deft as I slid it beneath the kid's mouse pad, my other resting palm on his bony shoulder. "Go on kid, take it. Treat yourself to a couple new I-tunes...or a Chinese hooker, whatever floats your boat." —I gave that shoulder an encouraging squeeze — "I'll be in later for my computer and our ancillary information."

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"Hi, Dad," came Martha's voice.

"Hey," I answered, stepping out into the early evening, my darkly pretty daughter-in-law leaning back in a chase lounge with my grandson perched on her lap.

"How was your day?"

"Good," I replied, pulling up a chair besides them, wagging a finger in front of Anthony's fat little face, his tiny hand clamping onto it. Four months old and already strong as all hell. "...Got the computer fixed."

"What was wrong with it?"

"Some bug," I shrugged, not meeting her eyes, concentrating on her tone. "How was your day?"

"Same old, same old," she said flatly.

Martha and my kid, Jack, had been staying with me for just shy of three months, just weeks after she'd had Anthony. Jack was a chemical engineer with a pharmaceutical house, a terrific job, but had been faced with a downsize or transfer—a transfer put him out here in LA, same pay, no loss of seniority, but with a home they couldn't move back in Virginia. My solution was simple; move in with me until you get rid of the Virginia house at a decent price. No rent, no nothing. My place was more than big enough, and it was only me out here in five rooms with a pool and an often smoggy view of Bunker Hill.

I have to admit that I liked the activity, the noise of a baby, a lot of times having dinner with him and Martha on nights when Jackie would be pulling late hours.

But this baloney with the computer had thrown me. I instantly knew Mar-solo was our Martha, my boy's wife, Anthony's mom. The timing was right—last Thursday I was doing one of the accounts I still audited, out until after eight that night, and Jack had pulled in a half hour after me.

Only one person home that afternoon...well, to be exact, there were two persons, but only one who could access the internet, pop onto "Abby pays up on poker night", and clear off the history log. I'd looked over the sheet the kid had printed out for me before I got home; two websites, erotic stories, a few hits on one day, then the same a couple days later, just like that. I looked at my calendar; she'd be logged on when I was out, two days a week usually, just in the past month. Their laptop had been going to work with Jack for a couple weeks now, a project he was working on off the company books, something that he hoped could pull in some serious money for them.

I finally glanced over at Martha...a tall girl, long auburn hair that she habitually wore tied up. The baby

had filled out her normally thin frame just a bit; a serious expression, my ex dubbing her "Marion the Librarian" after their first encounter. How old was she now, twenty-nine, maybe thirty. She'd always been rather shy around us, though in these last month's we'd developed an easy rapport, joking and teasing each other, a lively girlish sense of humor that she simply didn't let many people see. I sensed she was bored out here, lonely in a new town, the kid taking almost all of her time. She had to miss her friends back in Virginia, her sister, the girls she'd worked with.

"You eat yet?"

"No, I'll have something with Jack. ...You want me to fix you something?"

"I have some work to finish up," I said...

...work.

I went to the small bedroom that sufficed for my office and spent over three hours with the listing the computer kid had worked up. By the end of it I was literally shaking my head, absolutely waylaid with the stories Martha had been reading. For the most part they were all of a like theme; innocent wives entertaining their husband's friends in one manner or another, poker games, football parties, fishing trips, the action always starting off mildly enough, maybe the wife wearing something racy on a dare, some guy touching her, then always some serious gang-fuck action, nasty stuff; it wasn't exactly Hemingway, I'll tell you that...hell, it wasn't even a sweet-n-low version of Henry Miller.

What stoked me the most was the image of our demure Martha reading this stuff, furtive, embarrassed, trying to cover her tracks. The "Abby" tale in particular held me rapt, a young wife urged on by her husband to serve as hostess to his weekly poker party, his daring her to take it further, a shorter skirt one night, a bit more cleavage, a climax of him betting her wedding ring on a "sure hand" and of course, losing. You can imagine the end-run to that particular scenario. I shut my eyes and fantasized about her masturbating as she read along...had she been nude as she sat here at my desk, topless?

The anger I'd felt initially was gone by then. I sat there trying to fix my mind right, telling myself that I shouldn't be thinking like this, that I shouldn't be thinking of my kid's wife in terms like this. That was sick shit, the weird stuff that perverts thought of, dirty old fucking men. I should be pissed at her for doing it behind my son's back, for doing it on my computer, for sending my Dell over a cyber cliff.

I just had that image of her sitting here though, right in this chair. Maybe jumpy and nervous, listening for the sound of one of our car's in the driveway. My heart was galloping. I did something I'd never done in front of a computer. I undid my zipper and took it out, took it out and just started whacking off, just like some horned-out fifteen year old. It wasn't long...a minute, maybe two tops and I felt myself coming, thick globs of semen splattering across the keyboard, spotting the screen, my gut wrenched with the force of it. I sank back into the big leather chair, bright spots swirling on my periphery, my cock already softening. I took a gulp of air, then another. It was sweet...forty years of jerking off and fucking and I could only recall a couple times that had put me over like this. And I don't think any of them were past my twenty-ninth birthday.

"What in the fuck's the matter with you," I wheezed in bewildered disgust. I closed out the story and shut down the system, following the instructions the kid had given me on how to clear out the history I'd just created.

I heard Jack and Martha talking in the kitchen, but quietly went right to my room. I sprawled out on the bed without undressing. My eyes looked in the darkness. My mind was coming back to it again, finding new ingresses to my psyche. My cock stiffened of its own volition, confined and uncomfortably twisted within pants.

I don't know how long it was before I reached down and set it free.

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Two weeks had passed by the time I actually did anything. Everything went on just like before, the conversations about work, playing with Anthony, the occasional dinner or breakfast I'd cook up for my daughter-in-law and me.

I dropped the tattooed kid at the computer store two more hundreds; some spyware program that routed a concise history of our Martha's internet wanderings. I can't say I felt guilty about this invasion of her privacy, never justifying it by saying that it was, after all, my computer she was playing on. I didn't need an excuse, I just wanted to know, simple as that.

And she went right back to it, same genre of erotica, just a story or two at a time. I can't say when it came to me exactly, but by the end of those two weeks I had a healthy—or unhealthy—obsession with Martha and these dirty tales.

"I'm having a couple of the guys over for pinochle tomorrow, okay?"

"Yeah, sure," Martha answered, her back to me as she fixed a fresh diaper on Anthony's rump. "You don't have to ask me, Dad. It's your house."

"Well, it's your house too, least for now," I answered. "Anyway, it's just Tommy DiChenza and Mike Garnett."

Martha knew I had a standing game at the club house at least once a week, penny ante stakes, a few regulars, guys my age or a little older. Pinochle or bridge—card games for the thinking guy, I'd joke. Sometimes when we couldn't draw a third, Tommy D and I would square off for chess. Even though it was all nickel-and-dime stuff, we took it fucking seriously, if you didn't, you weren't invited back.

"You want me to take Anthony out for the afternoon so he doesn't bother you?"

"No, no. I want to show him off," I said quickly, a dark flicker of thought whispering that I wanted to show her off too.

"Okay," she smiled, barely glancing back to me from the task at hand.

"They could meet you too."

"Sure."

I watched her from behind for several seconds, my voice catching as I tried to speak. I actually turned away for a second, as if to escape the room.

"I'd like to meet 'em," she went on distractedly.

I wanted to just bust her then and there—"I've been reading your x-rated stories, baby..."—but knew I had to just set the table. If she was going to sit down, then it had to be her move.

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Tommy DiChenza was a handsome guy by anyone's standards. Tanned almost black, his hair thick and just graying at the temples, a retired millionaire yachtsman to look at him fast, expensively dressed even in the most casual attire. Fifty-eight and like a rock, the fucker still hit the boxing gym three mornings a week, though he only worked the bags now; a golf game that made me want to throw away my clubs.

He was shuffling the deck of cards, fanning them from palm to palm. It wasn't that unusual to have our games at my place now that the summer was here; a way to dodge the racket of spoiled-rotten rich kids using the club's pool and tennis courts.

"So..."

"So?" Mike Garnett chimed back with a smile, jiggling the ice in his Manhattan. I glanced at him, a very big man, sixty years old or so I thought, good looking though rough, bull-like in the neck; those forearms of his still hard as an oak banister. None of us knew for sure what he'd done in his working life, though he seemed to have that air of gratitude you'd see in certain men, namely the gratitude that he wasn't living out his golden years inside a Federal penitentiary.

Tommy laid out the deck in front of me and I made the cut. He took them back and started to deal, expertly peeling them from top of the deck.

"So how you enjoying the grandpa deal?" Mike asked.

"Great," I muttered, picking up my hand, not able to really focus. Martha had brought Anthony out when they'd arrived. They'd paid their homage, with Mike really getting a kick out of the kid in the way that lots of older guys do.

And that had been pretty much that. Martha took him down the hall to put him up for his nap and had not come back out. I wondered if she thought I'd be mad if she were to bother us.

We were playing three-handed pinochle, cut-throat with a kiddy at the center. I was not concentrating and Tommy had grunted in exasperation when I made a few stupid bids—he wanted to win, but he wanted a sharp fucking game.

"You need anything, Dad?" Martha asked. I hadn't heard her come back into the room, and was startled to see her standing just a few feet away in her swimsuit.

"Umm..."

"I can make you a sandwich or something. ...Mr. DiChenza? Mr. Garnett?"

They were shaking their heads, Mike smiling up at her in frank appreciation. The suit was modest

enough, a one piece in dark blue with a yellow stroke across the center. I swallowed hard.

"I keep trying to get her to learn pinochle or bridge," I said finally.

"You outta learn," Mike chimed in—Tommy just studied his cards restlessly; his opinion had ladies pretty much doing just one thing. Two, if they could cook spaghetti.

"One of these days," Martha answered, stepping closer, uneasy in her posture, almost shy. Her usually fair cheeks were flushed just a bit. I let me eyes quickly trail up along her body, the legs long and slim, athletic. Her belly was rounded just slightly, a tribute to her daily workouts in the pool and with her yoga tapes. Her breasts were still smallish, though having the baby had filled them out noticeably. She had a graceful swanlike neck, cheeks set high, very patrician in her bearing.

"Pull up a chair and watch," Mike offered.

"No, I don't want to bother you guys."

"Here, pull up a chair," I said, reaching out to drag another chair over to our table. "You can play through on one of my hands."

Hesitantly Martha sat down, grinning nervously. I couldn't tell if her nipples were peaked, but I knew that they were. I could feel Tommy cringing at having his game disrupted, but I made her take my cards, sliding my chair so I was slightly behind her.

"Now see..."

I walked her though the hand, Tommy laying a card out, bidding, watching as Mike followed it up. I slipped my fingers around her wrist to better see the cards, pointing to the one she should play with my free hand. Martha's pulse was racing wildly; I patted her shoulder after Mike took the hand. She was trembling.

She politely excused herself after that, a hoarseness in her voice. I watched her leave, going back towards her room, not the pool.

"Hey, I can buy her a book if she wants to learn," Tommy muttered under his breath, taking the cards through another shuffle. "...They got the ladies league for bridge and all."

"Nice girl," Mike commented, sipping from his drink.

"I gotta hit the head," I said just as he started to deal. "...Two minutes."

"Don't shake it too much, pal," Tommy said grouchily, standing up to stretch his own legs.

Down the hall I went, quietly, as if worried about waking the baby.

A soft muffled groan as I came up to her and Jackie's room. I eased up to the door, a hand on the jam.

That whispered moan, jagged and coarse, deepening. My daughter-in-law was diddling herself and doing it fucking good. The sound thickened, a quickening, shorter and gasping as it went.

I was rapt. I don't know how long I listened, though it couldn't have been for more than a minute or two.

Tommy DiChenza slapped me on the arm, making me jump. He shrugged, nodded at the door; Martha was nearly shrieking now, a choked-off sound as if she were chewing into a pillow. He made a puzzled face, smirking, my Martha beyond frenzied, the bed squeaking as she thrashed.

"What the fuck?" he mouthed silently, intent now, fucking interested.

The noise suddenly tapered—a rustling of sheets as if her legs were twitching about.

I pointed back to the den where we were playing, a quick motion to be quiet. We were sitting at the table playing when Martha came back out a few minutes later, skirting our area and using the patio door to get out to the pool. I watched her switch on the baby monitor, savoring the sleekness of her body as she balanced on the diving board and kicked off.

"Okay, now what the fuck was that?" Tommy intoned with a lecherous grin, leaning halfway across the table. Mike was all ears too, eyes bright behind his glasses. I glanced out there to the pool. Martha was cutting the water gracefully, her hair loosened, billowing as she surged through the water.

"Come on," Mike added, agitated as all hell to hear about what Tommy and I had heard cooking up in the back.

"Well..."

I looked out there at her swimming, concentrating on how graceful she was as I started to tell them, barely smiling to myself as they hooted in unison to the juicier details.

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"Let's teach her how to fucking play."

The words had been Tommy's, his dark eyes piercing me with as he spoke, studying for my reaction. It was a sensible subject to ponder, as here he was proposing toying with my son's wife, amusing himself with her, seducing her, there was nothing else implied in what he was saying.

I didn't answer immediately. I'd just kept watching the way she swam; her neat, meticulous laps.

"Hey, if we're out of line," Mike said softly.

"No," I said, shaking my head. "...Let's teach her how to play. See where it goes."

Twice more that week I hosted a card game, too frequent for our tastes, but we weren't really the purists we'd been before.

At that first game, Martha had made her appearance a little earlier than usual. We'd just buried one hand and she was out there, neat in a bright flowery sundress, the flush to her cheeks the same as that first day.



"Come on, honey. Let us teach you how to play," Mike spoke up. "Then we can play in pairs instead of this cut throat stuff."

"Or you can play your father-in-law here two-hand and take all his money," Tommy laughed.

"Come on, Martha," I said with a smile, again drawing a chair over for her, patting the seat to encourage her.

She sat down and for the next two hours we took her through the rudiments. She picked up on some of it surprisingly well, though her mind was clearly wandering. Again I looped a thumb along the inside of her wrists and found her pulse drumming hard, a thin sheen of perspiration along her throat despite the AC being cranked.

We played through with her taking a few hands solo, more and more distracted until she finally disengaged, thanking us, nodding when Mike asked her to join in the game we were having the day after next. That afternoon I walked Mike down the hallway, shuffling our feet as we came up to the bedroom door. Nothing, and then Mike smiled broadly. The sound was different, a humming edge to it, focused, the moans climbing into a husked crescendo.

I tugged his sleeve, did it a second time as he clearly wanted to listen in. He winked at Tommy as we came back to the table.

"Two more of these games and we'll have her dancin' on our laps," he chuckled, then a nervous glance towards me to see if I was struck wrong by the phrasing of it.

I held up two fingers, waggled 'em. "...Two more, tops."

The next day's game was the same as before, though Anthony was acting up and Martha had to get up to settle him back into his nap twice while we played. She was doing her own hand now, with me watching over her shoulder.

Again, nickel and dime stuff as always, a small vein along the side of her neck quivered noticeably as she'd counter their bids.

Tommy was winning hand after hand, not really giving slack on any of it, sliding the meager pot to him with aplomb each time.

"Well, at least I'm not playing for my clothes," Martha joked as the game winded down, my heart taking a leap, knowing that she'd bit.

"Hey, we could arrange that," Mike teased, his voice shakier than he'd have liked.

"Yeah, but we'd have to bring our wagers up accordingly though," Tommy said with a casualness that was amazing, as if this banter was the most innocent of musings.

Then he smiled warmly at Martha, pulling out the heavy wad of cash he always carried and held it up for emphasis. "Honey you look so beautiful in that dress that this wouldn't be enough for even one hand...just jokin' and all, but it's true."

We all laughed, Martha blushing brightly, averting her eyes, clearly taking it as a compliment, an embarrassed sidelong look at me as if just realizing that I was there.

"True, true," Mike added, raising his empty highball glass in a mock salute.

And thus ended our second game—Mike and Tommy both eliciting a promise from her to join us once again, one more lesson and she'd better believe they'd have her playing like a champ.

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"I'm sorry if I embarrassed you the other day," Martha said late the next day, busying herself with the coffee pot.

"Embarrassed me how?"

She stiffened her shoulders, her head sagging, back still to me.

"What I joked about with your friends ...playing for my dress. I'm sorry that I did that like that, I was just teasing with..."

"I've been reading your stories," I blurted—it wasn't what I'd wanted to say, the words shaky and weak.

"What stor..."

I let the silence hang there for a long moment, seeing the tension creep up her spine. "The stories that crashed out my computer—the one about Abby and the poker game."

Martha froze there; beyond mortified as she finally turned to face me, her delicate features flushed deep to a dark crimson, a hand sealed over her mouth.

"I'm..." Tears sprang at the corners of her eyes. She edged back, Anthony fussing noisily in his basinet.

"It's okay."

"...I'm sorry," came her voice, trembling with humiliation, sick with fear. "I'm... ..please don't tell Jack. I never did anything like..."

"It's okay, I said its okay."

"Oh, God, I'm..."

"I'm not telling anybody, okay. It's forgotten. Forgotten!"

"I'm so sorry, Dad. I just started playing with the internet one day and I was bored and..."

"You don't have to explain yourself, it's a non-issue."

"I'll never do it again. I swear..."

"You read what you want, whenever you want. My house is yours...and so is the computer."

Martha sniffled, wiped the wetness from her cheeks. Her relief was evident; she was utterly oblivious to what was coming.

"So do you want to maybe lose your dress for real?"

"I..."

The realization of what I'd just proposed seemed to hit her like a cold slap in the face, a moment of choking revulsion. Panic in those bright eyes.

"Look, just if you want to, okay?" I spoke up soothingly. "Nothing bad'll happen, I can promise you of that. Just if you're reading this stuff over and over, I thought you'd maybe be best to..."

"I'm sorry I used your computer..."

Anthony gave a loud shriek, probably somehow reading his mother's welter of emotions; she reached down into the basinet and clutched him to her tightly, the tears breaking over her cheeks again.

"...I sorry, I shouldn't have done that...and I shouldn't be looking at this...I don't know how I..."

I shushed her into silence, a finger pressed to my lips.

"Just said if you were playing with it in your mind like that, you could do it right here. No consequences...where it would be safe and... you know, just tease 'em a bit. You're beautiful enough, I'll tell you that. No stories'll come out of here. ...Just if you want to play with it, that's all."

Martha had backed away several more steps, she was biting down on her lip, the kid squirming and fussing in her arms. "...I'm married to your son for Christ's sake!"

I held out my hands. "That's why I'm saying it like this. I don't want you fixing on something reckless or dangerous. ...I love you like my own daughter, kid."

"Do you tell Kim or Anne to strip in front of your stupid friends?"

"No, no I don't."

"But you tell me..."

"I'm not telling you to do anything. Just that if you wanted to...if you wanted to tease 'em with it, there would be no consequences. Jack wouldn't know. Nobody would know."

She sniffled, her tone still harsh: "Oh, God, do they know about the stories?"

"No, absolutely not," I lied with a straight-face.

"Please tell me the truth?"

"I just did. I didn't tell them anything."

She shook her head and left the room, I heard her bedroom door slam shut. This time I didn't go to check on the sound effects.

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"There she is," Mike hailed as Martha entered the room the next afternoon, after we'd been playing for almost a half hour. "The next Cincinnati Kid."

"Are you playing with us or going out on the town?" Tommy intoned, eyeing her as she came up to the table. I hadn't known if she'd do it, if she'd even sit in for the game or anything. In point of fact she hadn't said three words to me since our last conversation. But here she was, her long hair bunched up elegantly atop her head, a classy black cocktail dress hemmed just above the knees, the neckline swept down to reveal a bit of lightly freckled cleavage. A string of pearls choked to her throat, a thin diamond tennis bracelet that I knew Jackie had given her for their fifth anniversary.

"Martha," I whispered in a mild fugue.

"Just thought that since I was learning to play, I might as well pretend I'm in Monte Carlo."

"Honey, I've been to Monte Carlo, and there ain't many ladies more gorgeous than you," Tommy said with sincere admiration, waving her towards the chair we had waiting.

"Thank you."

Martha looked down at me for the first time, a tight smile as she'd curtsied to the compliment. She slid up to the table—I glanced down expecting three inch black stilettos but saw that she was just wearing plain black flats.

"Sit," I offered, half in awe of her.

"So stakes are the same?" Tommy said as he picked up the deck.

"I don't know," Martha spoke up, an almost indiscernible quaver in her voice. "...I didn't bring any money with me."

"Well, we can let it..."

"I recall you offering to let me play for my clothes."

That deadened the room completely, despite the fact that the three of us had been steering to this exact end for over a week.

"Well?"

"But your wagers'll have to come up a bit, right?"

"The same three hand?" Tommy answered, taking his cash roll out and setting it atop the green felt.

Martha sighed knowingly and looked straight down at me, shaking her head with an air of sadness. "Liar," she said quietly.

"L..."

"Oh, no, they didn't see the stories," she mocked dully, locking her stare on me until I squirmed. "No, absolutely not...you are such a liar." She squared herself then and looked back at the other guys, panning from one addled face to the other and then back.

"So, gentlemen, did you enjoy the stories?"

For all his toughness, Mike looked down at the floor. Tommy though leaned back and met her gaze: "I thought they were badly written swill, but I liked reading 'em anyways."

"So you still want to gamble for my clothes?"

Tommy leaned forward and pressed his index finger to the center of the table. "I want them piled up right here, honey."

"And then?" Martha asked, blinking at her own words, her voice warbling badly.

"Let's just get you stripped, and then we'll worry about then?" Tommy winked. "...Same three-hand as we taught you, okay?"

Martha looked back down at me with a waiting expression, no words really needed, maybe an accusation for my not having protected her. She looked severely pretty in her black dress, her hair knotted up, thin black framed glasses perched high atop the bridge of her nose.

"If I had another week to learn, I'd play you all under the table at any game you had," she came back to Tommy.

"Yeah, but too bad we're playing today, honey."

"So let's just cut the deck, me and you and Mike." She dredged up a shaky grin, pointedly cutting me from the game. "Let it up to sheer luck."

"C-note a pop, you can..."

"One hundred," Martha cut in, fingering her pearls. "...One hundred," a slight touch to the sparkling bracelet at her wrist. "...And another hundred," she whispered brushing the dress where it curved to her shoulder.

"And what's underneath?" Mike spoke up slyly, finally finding his voice.

"...Oh, I think that's included with the price of the dress."

"Ante up, girl." Tommy said, laying Ben Franklin face up on the felt, Mike peeling two fifties to keep

them company.

"...Will you?" Martha asked, looking to me, her hands at the clasp of her necklace. My knees almost buckled, I slid behind her so she wouldn't see my bulging trousers, shaking as I undid the delicate hook.

Martha leaned in and placed it on the center of the table and watched as Tommy cut into the cards, then Mike, then her. Three of spades for her, low man—Mike greedily pulling in the cash and the pearls.

"Ante," Tommy said sharply, teeth raking his lower lip, another hundred, Mike feeding back the two fifties. Martha stretched her arm in front of me, her hand was trembling—I unfastened it, my own case of the shakes making it awkward.

She laid it out. She cut, then Mike, then Tommy. Hold 'em up.

Mike smirked and reeled in the money and the bracelet. "Ante up," he said with a bright leer.

"Only if I lose?" Martha said quietly, again brushing the black cloth.

"Are you sure?" I heard myself ask, not having even thought of what I was saying, catching the hard looks Mike and Tommy flashed my way.

"Does it matter if I'm sure or not, Dad?" she went on in that same quiet vein, a hint of accusation in her tone. "...Mr. Garnett's cut!"

Mike never took his eyes off Martha's face as he picked into the deck, never looked at his face card, never looked at Tommy's, or even at hers as she lifted the bottom deuce she now owned. He just watched for the reaction she had, a flash of physical weakness as if her legs might betray her.

"All accounts are to be squared immediately," Tommy chuckled.

"...Martha?" I whispered.

"Dad..."

"You don't have to..."

"All accounts are to be settled immediately," Mike laughed, aping Tommy as he banged his palm against the table top. "Always wanna be square with the damned house."

Martha fiddled her hands together; I realized instantly that she was twisting her wedding band. She turned and showed them the back of her hand, thumb bent across to put motion to it. "How about double or nothing?" she asked, averting her eyes from their hungry stares.

"Well, technically it ain't double or nothing, kid" Mike mused.

"...I win and I get my things back. ...The game ends. We walk away."

"...What exactly comes with the ring, sister?" Tommy asked, pitched forward now, leaning his weight against the table until it creaked.

"What do you think, Mr. DiChenza?" she answered coldly, the voice crackling again.

"I'm asking..."

"If I lose...if I lose, you won't have to ask. You can just...just tell me what to do."

"That implies a whole lot of interesting possibilities, little girl."

"Yes or no?"

Tommy made a low chortle as he carefully slid his pile of loot back to the center, nodding as Mike followed his lead. Martha met my eyes as she struggled to pull the gold band free: "...I never had it off before," she commented flatly, pausing to study it before gently placing it next to the jumble of cash and jewelry.

"Ladies' cut," Mike said.

Martha pulled from low in the deck, a palpable sigh of relief as she held the King of Diamonds aloft, Mike and Tommy's expressions drooping accordingly. Tommy cut almost to the bottom, a grin widening as he eyed the card and then deliberately slipped it—the black Ace—beneath her ring.

"Fuck yes," he muttered, pushing back from the table and getting to his feet. "Ace of fucking spades, you just read it, girl. Just fucking read it!"

"That dress comes off now," Mike said, clicking his fingers sharply as if summoning a slacking waitress.

I watched Martha grip the edge of the table, another moment when it seemed as if she might faint.

"...Come on, baby," Mike hectored sharply, another officious snap of his fingers.

"Martha, you don't..."

"The clothes go right here!" Tommy cut in, absolutely ignoring me as he jabbed his thick forefinger at the table.

"...Okay," she answered finally, nodding as if coming to a decision. "Okay."

"Right here," Tommy repeated, reaching down now to pluck up the ring.

Martha stepped back and reached for the hasp at the back of her dress, undoing it, looking at each one of us in turn as she shrugged the fabric loose from around her shoulders. Her cheeks aflame, she shook it free, drawing it down the length of her torso, her skin smooth and creamy beneath, the brassiere and panties black with a minimum of frill, the dress down the length of her toned legs, around her feet—

She put it on the table, looking at me as she reached behind her again and deftly undid the bra, slipping the straps from along her shoulders, the weight of her breasts pulling it down until she slid the lacy cups free of her flesh.

Martha's breasts were perfectly proportioned, not overly large, but grown markedly heavier with her pregnancy, the right one seeming slightly bigger than the left. Each was weighted deeply in their bottom curve. Her nipples were dark and peaked, thick around as my pinkie.

"Nice fuckin' charlies there, girl," Mike mused appreciatively as he slid back from the table now too. "...You don't see a pair of 'em that nice too often, especially after a kid."

"Uh, uh," Tommy put in, wagging his head now at the sight of her nearly bared young body.

Martha placed the bra atop the dress and delicately slipped her fingers inside her panties—stopping as Tommy loudly cleared his throat.

"Let's let your father-in-law do the final unwrapping," he said, pointing down at me in my chair, teeth again raking his lips.

"Only fair," Mike put in. "None of us would be playing here if it weren't for him."

"Hey..."

"No, it's okay," Martha said, hesitant as she turned to face me and in three strides came stood before me, a shocking sensation as she gently feathered her fingers along the top of my head, down my temples so lightly that I wasn't even sure it was a real touch. "...And they're right about it being all thanks to you."

I felt their eyes on me, the three of them staring, her simple touch unleashing a deep surge of sexual excitement through my brain. I noticed the raised scar from her recent c-section; shaking as I slipped my fingertips under the elastic band of her panties and slowly drew them down until she daintily stepped out of them, one leg at a time. I let my palm run the length of her thigh as I straightened back up, seeing the dewy droplets clinging within the dark tangle of pubic hair.

"Go on, suck on those tits, you know you wanna," Tommy intoned. And I did want to, a feral lust was boiling up within me, the qualms and vacillation I'd been experiencing had evaporated completely as I'd stripped off the last of her clothing. The thoughts that this girl was my son's bride were still with me, only now they inflamed me, my vision actually blurring with the surge of adrenalin coursing through my blood.

I leaned in and cupped her breasts, feeling her quiver as I took a nipple in my mouth and sucked, the flow of milk so warm and shocking that I actually backed away for a second, Martha's eyes were clamped, her breath shallow and jagged.

I suckled again, softly tugging the nipple with my teeth, the palpable spray of milk against the roof of my mouth, I sucked harder, feeling her flinch as I took more of her breast into my mouth...then she was pulling back, being pulled back, Mike and Tommy on opposite sides, hands on her shoulders, just rough enough to make her eyes open and dart.

"You get the first round, pal," Tommy wheezed, a hand curving about Martha's waist, pulling her across the several feet that separated us from the couch, shoving her down onto it with more force than he had to use. "...Get her warmed up real good for myself and Michael."



I walked in front of the couch and undressed without a word, Martha's eyes wide and glazed as she watched, drifting shut as she saw my erect cock bounce free.

"Suck it, sweetie," Tommy ordered, one knee on the couch as he leaned in to stroke her breast, up to the back of her head with a sudden pressure: "...I told you to get sucking!"

I edged closer, towering over her, and Tommy shoved her to me, straining against his grip and then, her hands coming to my hips, she took me into her mouth with a quick dip of her head, actually doing it, working down the length of my shaft, her tongue swirling along the heavily veined underside, a low murmur as she edged herself to the edge of the cushion, cupping my balls, saliva glistening as she began to draw herself back and forth along it, eyes lifted to me now, never breaking the gaze...

"Make her call him Dad," Mike laughed, his face bent so he was right up front with the action.

"She'll be calling us all 'Dad' in a while," Tommy answered, pushing her forward onto me until she retched.

"Make her do it now."

Tommy had a hold of her hair and yanked her off me, her chin wet, eyes unfocused.

"Say it."

"Dad..." she whispered.

"Daddy," he chided lewdly.

"...Daddy."

"Tell him to fuck you. Fucking ask for it. ...Ask!"

"Fu..."

"Call him Daddy," Mike Garnett hissed at her ear, his blood up—all of us were so jacked with testosterone, literally rabid with it. Each new perversion ratcheting it up to uglier and uglier levels, Martha the deer-in-the-headlights, our best fucking toy ever.

"Daddy..."

"You fuck him, sister," Tommy whispered. "I wanna watch you ride."

I wanted it too, I dropped onto the couch and pulled her across my lap, straddling me, pulling her to me and kissing her hard, the moment of resistance until her lips parted, I forced my tongue into her mouth, a pig with it, sucking her tongue, pulling her bunched up hair free, coursing my fingers through it.

"You like this, Martha?" I said, looking into her eyes as I hefted her up and positioned her atop my hard-on, her gasp as I barely eased into her sodden cunt.

"Go slow," she mouthed.

I grappled onto her hips and drove her down onto me as hard as I possibly could, her spine stiffening, a shriek that she chewed off herself.

"Oh, you like that don't you," Tommy laughed. "...Our prize fucking cunt."

"Ride it," Mike ordered, but Martha was already doing exactly that, positioning her legs and rocking up and down, her breath quickening, that low moan I'd heard through her door two weeks ago.

I sucked at her wildly bouncing tits, again that wondrous spurt of warmth and sweetness in my mouth, Martha's head lolling as she hammered herself up and down along my cock like a piston, eyes clamped shut now as if welcoming it...

"Outstanding," Tommy cut in, reaching across to loop her wedding ring around a nipple, toying with it, then pinching it so hard that she yelped, a froth of milk spraying across my chest, he tugged again and again, milking her 'til my belly was streaked white all the while as Martha continued to furiously hump away on me, a catch in her breathing and then she came, the orgasm rippling through her, roiling as she continued to pound her dripping vagina down on me penis.

"I'm gonna fuck you right up the ass, sweetie," Tommy was shouting then, braying the words in her ear as another climax and then another rocked up Martha's spine, my palm cupping her smooth bottom as she leveraged for better position. "...Just like in all those bullshit stories you got off on."

"I can't stop coming," I heard her murmur, knowing she couldn't, that she was lost in it.

And then she sagged with it, collapsed against me. I immediately rolled over with her in my arms, her eyes still closed as I started to pump her furiously, sinking the full weight of my body atop her, an urgent need to ejaculate seizing me, and then it was there, the first incredible spurt, I grunted with it, a violent spasm that threatened to rip by abdominal muscles apart.

Martha's eyes were open and silently watching me as I finished, tears formed at the crooks, a weak smile forming. I eased my weight off her; her tits were slick with milk and sweat. I'd come inside my own son's wife, ejaculated in her, put my sperm inside her.

"Great ride," Mike's voice cut in, clapping loudly.

"And now we get our turn," Tommy added.

"Dad..."

Her hand gently brushed my cheek. I thumbed away a tear from the crinkle of her eye.

"Are you alright?"

Martha nodded, and then looked over to Tommy and Mike standing only a few feet off and busily peeling off their clothes. Mike caught her eyes: "...So, you ever have it in the ass, sister? Or you just get off reading about it?"

Martha shook her head slightly, scared, rapt as the two men quickly became naked: Tommy solid and thick in the chest, exceptionally hairy, his cock as big around as my wrist, long with a blunt purplish head. He stroked it for her benefit and grinned. "It's a simple yes or no. Either some guy shoved his cock up your ass or not."

Martha shook her head again, with me still lying there atop her, my own cock shriveling, guilt rearing up inside now, revulsion at what I'd just done with her.

"A first time for everything," Mike chuckled. He had a big gut on him; his flesh was sagged with age, still strong and agile though, thick mats of gray hair covering his chest and stomach. He was stroking his cock too, an ugly uncircumcised rod longer than even Tommy's.

"Okay if we use her in your bed, pal?" Tommy went on, wagging a finger at her.

"Martha, you don't..."

"No, I said..."

"I don't want you to," I whispered urgently.

"I want to," she said. "...I'm sorry."

"They'll..."

"I know," she answered, shaky as she slid herself from beneath me.

"Martha?"

"Now go get your little tail in the bed," Tommy ordered, holding the wedding band aloft. Her legs tottered as she stood, thick rivulets of semen running along the inside of her thighs, her hand trying to wipe them away. She caught my expression as she did it, looking away quickly, then back to me.

"It'll be okay, Dad," she said.

"I said get in the frickin' bed," Tommy repeated, only this time stepping over to viciously crack his huge palm across her softly rounded behind, catching hold of a shank of her hair, tugging her in his wake as he and Mike went down the hallway, her gaze holding mine until Tommy sent her reeling ahead of them like a rag doll with a stout push.

I lay there for several moments, stunned by it all, the welter of conflicting emotions. I could hear the guys laughing in my bedroom; anger and fear and rut.

After nearly five full minutes I got to my feet and put my pants back on, not wanting to be nude any longer. I looked at the black dress and cash and pearls strewn atop my card table and nearly got nauseous. The voices grew louder from down the hall, bellicose and raucous—I clearly heard Martha whimpering "daddy" over and over again, the creaks of a bed being trundled. After a while I couldn't help but wander towards the sounds. I had to, I had to see it. My door had been left ajar, Martha atop my mattress face up, tangled in the sheets, two men straddling her face, pulling her mouth from cock to cock, burying themselves into her until she would be literally gagging, their laughter coarse and

frenzied, hunched over her like a coven of succubus trolls.

Unseen and unnoticed, I watched for several minutes and then turned and stepped into her room, walking up to Anthony's crib. He was sound asleep, peaceful. I made myself look down at him for as long as I'd watched the scene in my bedroom.

Martha's anguished shriek of pain made me cringe, though the baby hardly stirred. I stumbled back into the hallway as the blurred torrent of words filled the air: ...oh, god, take it out take it out take it out...please, please, oh god, god...

"Oh, this fuckin' ass is tight, baby" came Mike's husked bellow. "I am your fuckin' first, ain't I?"

...takeitouttakeitouttakeitplease...oh,please...

"Easy, fucking easy," again Mike, "Be a good girl for daddy. ...Daddy's good little fucking girl."

...pleaseohgodpleaseplease...pleasestoppleasest...

"Tell him you like it, bitch!" Tommy commanded. "...Tell him!"

I stepped into the doorway, Martha up on her knees, Mike with his big cock drilled to hilt up her ass, meaty fingers clawing into the soft flesh her hips as he carefully thrust into her again and again, perspiration beaded on his across his high forehead, dripping off him, Martha's face ground down into the sheets, the pleas faded to a thin guttural keening, handfuls of sheet clutched in her tiny hands.

"Tell him!" Tommy yelled again, kneeling on the bed along her head, engorged cock swaying in front of her face like an empty flagpole. He spied me standing there and broke into an obscene smirk. Mike turned to me in that same instant, completely out of breath, never breaking off the tempo of his assault on Martha's anus, that identical smirk cutting his own deeply lined face.

As we silently stared each other down, the keening began to change, that low moan, the arching of my daughter-in-laws spine, head slumping and lolling, hair a tangled shroud. Tommy winked at me, her moaning hitched now, her pelvis shifting into a rhythm with Mike's thrusts, a surrender to him as he drove into her body over and over—the orgasm seemed to crush her when it came, stiffening her torso out like a clubbed fish, a bleating groan of ecstatic pleasure that brought her face up out of the sheets and set her gaze heavenward...

"That boy of yours sure knows how to pick 'em," Tommy jeered, forcibly yanking her head about, eyes fluttering open for an instant as yet another climax wracked through her, tits slung back and forth with each shift of Mike's hips, her mouth slackened and wet, eyes glassy and threatening to roll backwards in her skull, an expression of such rapturous abandon that I knew I would be haunted by it forever.

She'd recognized me in that instant, and she smiled...